

North West School of Surgery COVID-19 Update

Sent by email 26 March 2020

Dear Trainees,

I recently met with both a TPD group and a Trainee Reps group from the School of Surgery. There will be weekly opportunities in the form of a virtual meeting for the specialty trainee representatives to ask questions during this time (Fridays at 9am).

We have a School of Surgery COVID-19 update area on our nwpgmd website at https://nwpgmd.nhs.uk/Specialty_Schools/Surgery/COVID-19

Below are the key documents that we covered during the briefings: we have to bear in mind all these statements may change pending what happens with COVID-19. These are today's decisions/statements.

1. **JCST document:** (available at <https://www.jcst.org/jcst-news/2020/03/19/covid-19/>). Some Key points: IST trainees do not need to benchmark with National Selection. Trainees will be allowed to go on a TIG fellowship without the FRCS exam completed.
2. **Exams:** No exams at present; next sittings planned for after 1 September 2020 at present. Some are trying to accommodate extra spaces in the autumn (watch this space).
3. **ARCPs:** There is acknowledgement that many trainees will be redeployed. The ARCP panel will be dependent on the Educational Supervisor's report covering the whole year and we will be sending out guidelines for all AES's about what to include in this report in the near future. The following is a link to "North West School of Surgery COVID-19 Training Disruption Notification Form" that you will need to fill in alongside form R:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=K5Gn_5ewMUGcD9DoB1Wyg2DExoUw6gZDq_TYdlawCSVUOUIFQIk1UINZNk5XWVZYOUhHUUIEQ0Q5Ni4u

Attached is also a form that will help you document lost time in training and be able to upload as evidence for your ARCP. If your specialty (e.g. T&O) creates their own form to upload for ARCP then do use that form. However, if not, please use this attached form ("[COVID-19 Diary](#)") to document what you are missing and what you are doing for your ARCP. It does not need to be filled in every day, it can be done weekly (if appropriate). If you do not document what you have missed, it will be hard to judge your portfolio.

4. **Lead Employer:** All self-isolation time will be paid time. If you are self-isolating or need to have time off due to symptoms of COVID-19, please can you inform your unit and trust HR, the lead employer (lead.employer@sthk.nhs.uk) and your TPD.
5. **Regional teaching:** We are trying to continue with regional teaching through virtual means. T&O and ENT have already held virtual teaching days. We acknowledge that some trainees will not be able to attend these days and that patient care and supporting the NHS is more important. Therefore, the 70% teaching attendance for this year will not be mandatory. If you are self-isolating (or have time) and would like to get involved in setting up virtual teaching sessions or online resources, please contact your regional teaching lead, TPD, Nadeem Khwaja (nkhwaja@nhs.net) or Ambareen Kauser (CST lead - ambareen.kausar@elht.nhs.uk).

6. **Retraining/Redeployment within the Hospital:** Other schools have supplied us with some key websites and these are on our School of Surgery website. However local trusts should supply you with adequate retraining.
7. **Study leave:** please see HEE document. Key points: All study leave is suspended until further notice. Study leave can be authorised if you would like to book courses in advance. However, we would advise you not to pay anything for a course or conference (if at all possible), in advance. No accommodation nor Travel should be booked until nearer the time in the light of the uncertainty we face. Previously authorised study leave (courses, accommodation, travel etc) that has been cancelled will be paid for if you apply through the study leave team. Please try and get a refund for anything cancelled. N.B. any face to face courses are unlikely to go ahead for at least 3 months unless they are retraining. However, online courses may be available. Patient care and supporting the NHS is more important than study leave.
8. **OOP trainees:** if you are an OOP trainee and would like to return to work in the NHS, please contact your TPD and Ashley Barrett. There are HEE SuppoRTT induction packages continuing to be run.
9. **Isolation (Self, pregnancy, health, Carer):** If you are not physically coming into the hospital (for whatever reason), please can you let the lead employer (lead.employer@sthk.nhs.uk) know and also your TPD. If you would like to be part of a 'COVID-19 – School of Surgery change in circumstances' group; please email Andrea Sheel (trainee lead argsheel@doctors.org.uk).

It may be an opportunity to acquire new medical knowledge and new techniques during redeployment. Thank you for supporting the NHS, each other and your other colleagues during these difficult and changing times.

Best wishes
Alison Waghorn

Alison Waghorn
Head of School of Surgery, HEE NW
0151 706 3412